



Convention Platform Submission

Proposal Type

- Amendment to Existing Plank

Platform Section Reference

TRIBAL RELATIONS

We believe the best interests of all South Dakota citizens will result from working cooperatively with tribal governments.

Additionally, under Platform Specifics, there is a dedicated Section 6.0 on Tribal Relations:

6.0. Tribal Relations

6.1

Cooperation —We affirm our commitment to work cooperatively with Tribal Governments.

6.2

Commitment – We are committed to improving the State-Tribal Relationship to enhance the lives of our state’s tribal members.

Proposed Language

Revised Tribal Relations Principle:

TRIBAL RELATIONS

We believe the best interests of all South Dakota citizens will result from working cooperatively with tribal governments, respecting tribal sovereignty as outlined in the United States Constitution's Indian Commerce Clause (Article I, Section 8) and South Dakota's compact with the United States (Article XXII), which reserves federal jurisdiction over Indian lands. We support state-tribal compacts to facilitate collaboration while promoting mutual respect and self-determination for tribal nations.

Expanded Platform Specifics Section 6.0:

6.0. Tribal Relations

6.1

Cooperation —We affirm our commitment to work cooperatively with Tribal Governments, recognizing the unique sovereign status of tribal nations within South Dakota.

6.2

Commitment – We are committed to improving the State-Tribal Relationship to enhance the lives of our state’s tribal members, including through voluntary compacts that address shared challenges like public safety, infrastructure, and economic opportunities.

6.3 (New)

Constitutional Framework – We uphold the federal framework for Indian affairs as established in the U.S. Constitution (Article I, Section 8) and South Dakota Constitution (Article XXII), advocating for state policies that respect federal preemption while fostering productive partnerships.

6.4 (New)

Support for Compacts – We endorse state-tribal compacts on key issues, including cross-jurisdictional law enforcement agreements, and resource management, to promote stability, economic growth, and cultural preservation in South Dakota's diverse communities.

Rationale / Supporting Explanation

South Dakota's demographics underscore the need for a more robust tribal relations plank: The state is home to nine federally recognized tribes (including the Cheyenne River Sioux, Oglala Sioux, and others), encompassing over 12% of the state's land area in reservations. Recent sources, including 2020 Census data and subsequent analyses, indicate that approximately 9–11.3% of South Dakota's population identifies as Native American (around 90,000–100,000 people), with variations depending on whether reporting is for "American Indian and Alaska Native alone" (typically around 8.5–9.7%) or "alone or in combination with other races" (around 11.1–11.3%). This places South Dakota among the top states nationally for Native American population share, often ranking fourth behind Alaska, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. This unique composition means tribal issues directly impact statewide governance, economy, and social fabric—issues like gaming revenue (which generates millions annually under federal law), law enforcement jurisdictional challenges (e.g., the 2020 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *McGirt v. Oklahoma* influencing tribal lands), and resource disputes (such as water rights under the Pick-Sloan Plan).

The current plank is laudably cooperative but lacks depth, omitting explicit ties to constitutional provisions that define the legal landscape. Referencing the U.S. Constitution's Indian Commerce Clause (which grants Congress exclusive authority over Indian tribes, preempting state overreach) and South Dakota Constitution Article XXII (which explicitly disclaims state jurisdiction over Indian lands as part of the state's enabling act for admission to the Union in 1889) grounds the platform in legal reality, reducing potential for unconstitutional policies and signaling respect for federalism—a core Republican value echoed in the platform's Limited Government principle.

This expansion fills gaps by promoting practical solutions to real-world tensions, such as the 2025 disputes over tribal checkpoints during emergencies or economic partnerships amid post-pandemic recovery. It enhances the platform's relevance without expanding government; instead, it empowers voluntary, sovereignty-respecting collaborations that benefit all citizens, upholding the platform's emphasis on personal responsibility, property rights, and peace through strength.

Supporting Document(s)

Convention Platform Submission (continued)

Members Who Also Support This Platform Plank

Gary & Barb Sokolow

Confirmation

✓ I affirm that this submission reflects my own views and is submitted in good faith for consideration by the Platform Committee. I understand that acceptance or rejection is determined by committee and convention vote and that I am an active, registered Republican in the State of South Dakota.

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Role / Title

Convention Delegate

Other Role

County

Hand